



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

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**FEDERAL JUDGE IMPOSES JURY'S DEATH SENTENCE VERDICT ON ESCAPEE
CONVICTED OF MURDERING EX-GIRLFRIEND WHILE ON THE RUN**

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced today that United States District Judge Walter S. Smith, Jr., in Waco, Texas, sentenced 29-year-old Sherman Lamont Fields to die by lethal injection for murdering his ex-girlfriend after escaping from the McLennan County Jail in November 2001.

"Mr. Fields is a violent criminal who escaped from a Texas jail to commit the brutal and cold-blooded murder of a young woman. This culminated a history of criminal acts of violence by Fields. Imposition of a death sentence is a solemn occasion, but this defendant's background and this horrible crime earned him the ultimate punishment," stated Sutton.

On February 6, 2004, a jury returned a verdict of death for Fields after convicting him of conspiracy to provide contraband and prohibited objects to prison inmates, escape, using and carrying a firearm while an escapee, carjacking, using and carrying a firearm during a carjacking, using and carrying a firearm that resulted in the death of his ex-girlfriend and being a convicted felon in possession of a firearm. In addition to the death penalty handed down for the charge of carjacking resulting in death, Fields was sentenced according to the federal sentencing guidelines to a mandatory consecutive term of 715 months imprisonment on the remaining charges. Fields is currently serving a 151-month prison sentence for a previous federal firearms conviction.

Testimony during trial revealed that between October and December 2001, Fields and co-defendant 26-year-old Benny Donnell Garrett (a.k.a. "Super"), a former corrections officer at the McLennan County Detention Center in Waco, were involved in a conspiracy in which Garrett would provide contraband and prohibited objects to prison inmates in exchange for money. This included alcohol, marijuana, tobacco, and a cell phone. In addition, Garrett, in exchange for the promise of money, helped Fields escape the detention facility by providing him with a key to a fire escape door.

— more —

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The jury found that Fields had been in federal custody awaiting trial on federal firearms charges for approximately six weeks when he escaped from the McLennan County Detention Center on November 6, 2001. After escaping, Fields shot and killed his ex-girlfriend near Downsville, Texas. The jury also found that on November 15, 2001, Fields, using a firearm, stole a 1999 Chevy Lumina, and on November 24, 2001, Fields, a convicted felon, possessed a .22 Ruger. Fields had been convicted on July 30, 1992, for Attempted Murder by Firearm in the 54th District Court, McLennan County, Texas, and was sentenced to serve eight years in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

Fields was arrested in Waco without incident by the Waco Police Department after being a fugitive for approximately three weeks. Sutton commended the great work by the United States Marshals Service, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, McLennan County Sheriff's Office, Waco Police Department and Assistant United States Attorneys Greg Gloff and Jake Snyder in bringing Fields to justice.

On March 23, 2004, Judge Smith sentenced Garrett to four years imprisonment and ordered him to pay a \$4,000 fine. Garrett pled guilty on October 9, 2003, to conspiracy to escape, providing prohibited objects to prisoners and distributing marijuana within 1,000 feet of a school, namely St. Paul's Episcopal Day School on November 20, 2001.

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